MR. *Howard's*

ELECTION SERMON.

MAY 31, 1780.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

HONORABLE COUNCIL,

AND THE HONORABLE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS-BAY,

IN

NEW-ENGLAND,

MAY 31, 1780.

BEING THE ANNIVERSARY FOR THE ELECTION OF THE HONORABLE COUNCIL.

By SIMEON HOWARD, A. M.

Paſtor of the Weſt Church in BOSTON.

N. B. Several paſſages omitted in preaching are now inſerted in the publication of this diſcourſe.

BOSTON, NEW-ENGLAND:

Printed by JOHN GILL, in COURT-STREET.

MDCCLXXX.

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS-BAY.

IN COUNCIL, JUNE 1, 1780.

ORDERED, That *Moſes Gill*, *Henry Gardner* and *Timothy Danielſon*, Eſquires, be and hereby are appointed a Committee to wait upon the Rev. Mr. *Simeon Howard*, and return him the Thanks of this Board, for his Sermon delivered Yeſterday before both Houſes of the General Aſſembly; and to requeſt a Copy thereof for the Preſs.

True Copy,

Atteſt.

SAMUEL ADAMS, Secretary

BRITISH MUSEUM

A N

ELECTION SERMON.

EXODUS 18. 21.

—*Thou ſhalt provide out of all the people, able men, ſuch as fear God, men of truth, hating coveteouſneſs ; and place ſuch over them to be rulers.*—

ALMIGHTY God who governs the world generally carries on the deſigns of his government by the inſtrumentality of ſubordinate agents ; hereby giving ſcope and opportunity to his creatures to become his miniſters for good to one another, in the exerciſe of the various powers and capacities with which he has endowed them. Tho' for the vindication of his honor, to diſpel the darkneſs and give a check to the idolatry and vice which overſpread the world, and in order to prepare mankind for the reception of a Saviour to be manifeſted in due time, God was pleaſed to take the Jewiſh nation under his particular care and protection, and to become their political

political law-giver and head; yet he made uſe of the agency of ſome of that people in the adminiſtration of his government. The legiſlative power he ſeems to have reſerved wholly to himſelf; there being no evidence that any of the rulers or aſſemblies of the people had authority to make laws. But the judicial and executive powers were intruſted with men. At the firſt inſtitution of the government, Moſes ſeems to have exerciſed the judicial authority wholly by himſelf. In this buſineſs he was employed from morning till evening, when Jethro, his father in law, the prieſt and prince of Midian came to viſit him. This wiſe man, for ſuch he ſurely was, obſerved to Moſes, that this buſineſs was too heavy for him, and what he was not able to perform alone; and therefore adviſed him to appoint proper perſons to bear the burthen with him, provided it was agreeable to the divine will. Moſes it is ſaid, in the context, hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had ſaid. There can be no doubt but that God approved this meaſure, tho' it was firſt ſuggeſted by a pagan, otherwiſe it would not have been adopted. It ſeems indeed to have been highly expedient, and even neceſſary. From whence it appears, that even in this government which was ſo immediately the work of God, room was left for men to make ſuch appointments and inſtitutions, as by experience ſhould be found neceſſary for the due adminiſtration of it. The general

plan

plan was laid by God, and he was the ſole legiſlator. This was neceſſary in that age of darkneſs, idolatry and vice. Mankind ſeem to have been too ignorant and corrupt to form a conſtitution, and a code of laws, in any good meaſure adapted to promote their piety, virtue and happineſs. But God left many ſmaller matters to be regulated by the wiſdom and diſcretion of the people. This is agreeable to a general rule of the divine conduct; which is not to accompliſh that, in a ſupernatural or miraculous way, which may be done by the exertion of human powers.

It is ſaid, in the context, that in compliance with the advice of Jethro, Moſes choſe able men—and made them rulers. But it is generally ſuppoſed that they were choſen by the people. This is aſſerted by Joſephus, and plainly intimated by Moſes in his recapitulary diſcourſe recorded in 1 chap. of Deut. where he ſays to the people, "I ſpake unto you, ſaying I am not able to bear you myſelf alone—*take ye* wiſe men, and underſtanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you". So that theſe officers were without doubt elected by the people, tho' introduced by Moſes into their office. And indeed the Jews always exerciſed this right of chooſing their own rulers; even Saul and David and all their ſucceſſors in the throne, were made kings by the voice of the people. (ſee 1 Sam. 11, 15. 2 Sam. 2, 4. 5. 3.) This natural and important right, God never deprived them of, tho' they had ſhewn ſo much folly

folly and perverſeneſs, in rejecting him, and deſiring to have a king like the nations around them.

THE buſineſs for which Jethro adviſed, that theſe rulers ſhould be choſen was to decide the ſmaller and leſs difficult matters of controverſy that aroſe among the people; while cauſes of greater conſequence were to be brought before Moſes: So that they were a ſort of inferior judicial officers, or judges of inferior courts. Tho' they were not officers of the higheſt dignity and authority in the ſtate, yet the midianitiſh ſage adviſed, that they ſhould be "able men, ſuch as fear God, men of truth hating coveteouſneſs; judging that ſuch men only were fit for the office. He has here in a few words pointed out to us what ſort of men are proper to be put in authority, whether in an higher or lower ſtation; for if ſuch qualifications are neceſſary for this inferior office, they muſt ſurely be more ſo, for the higher and ſupreme offices in government. And the conſideration of theſe qualifications, is what I principally intend in the following diſcourſe: But before I enter upon this, I would give a little attention to two or three other points. Accordingly I ſhall conſider,

I. THE neceſſity of civil government to the happineſs of mankind.

II. THE right of the people to chooſe their own rulers.

III. The

III. THE buſineſs of rulers in general.

Theſe particulars being finiſhed in a few words, I ſhall then,

IV. PARTICULARLY conſider the qualifications pointed out in the text, as neceſſary for civil rulers.

After which, the ſubject will be applied to the preſent occaſion.

I. LET us conſider the neceſſity of civil government for the happineſs of mankind. Men have in all ages and nations been induced by a ſenſe of their wants and weakneſſes, as well as by their love of ſociety, to keep up ſome intercourſe with one another. A man totally ſeparated from his ſpecies, would be leſs able to provide for himſelf than almoſt any other creature. Some ſort of ſociety, ſome intercourſe with other men is neceſſary to his happineſs, if not to his very exiſtence.

SUPPOSE then a number of men living near together, and maintaining that intercourſe which is neceſſary for the ſupply of their wants, but without any laws or government eſtabliſhed among them by mutual conſent; or in what is called a ſtate of nature. In this ſtate every one has an equal right to liberty, and to do what he thinks proper. The love of liberty is natural to all: It appears the firſt, opperates the moſt

forceably and is extinguiſhed the laſt of any of our paſſions. And this principle would lead every man to purſue and enjoy every thing, to which he had an inclination. Several perſons would no doubt deſire and purſue the ſame thing, which only one could enjoy. Hence conteſts would ariſe ; and, no one elſe having a right to interfere, they muſt be ſettled by the parties : But prejudice and ſelf-love would render them partial judges, and probably prevent an amicable ſettlement ; ſo that the diſpute muſt at laſt be ended by the ſtrongeſt arm ; and thus the liberty of the weak would be deſtroyed by the power of the ſtrong. Every unſucceſsful competetor would think himſelf injured by another's ſeizing that to which, in his own opinion, he had an equal right, and would endeavour to obtain compenſation : This would provoke retaliation, and naturally lead on to an endleſs reciprocation of injuries. The injured who found himſelf unable to contend with his adverſary, would call in the aſſiſtance of ſome more powerful combatant, to avenge his cauſe: The aggreſſor too would endeavor to ſtrengthen himſelf for defence by aſſociates ; and thus parties would be formed for rapine, devaſtation, and murder ; and the peaceful ſtate of nature ſoon be exchanged for a number of little contending tyrannies, or for one ſucceſsful one, that ſhould ſwallow up all the reſt. This would generally be the caſe where men ſhould attempt to live without laws or government ; nor can they any way ſecure themſelves againſt all manner of violence and injuries

injuries from bad men, but by uniting together in ſociety, agreeing upon ſome univerſal rules to be obſerved by all ;—that controverſies ſhall be determined, not by the parties concerned, but by diſintereſted judges, and according to eſtabliſhed rules; that their determinations ſhall be enforced by the joint power of the whole community either in puniſhing the injurious or protecting the innocent. Man is not to be truſted with his unbounded love of liberty, unleſs it is under ſome other reſtraint, than what ariſes from his own reaſon or the law of God. Theſe, in many inſtances, would make but a feeble reſiſtance to his luſt or avarice ; and he would purſue his liberty to the deſtruction of his fellow creatures, if he was not reſtrained by human laws and puniſhment.

Let us next conſider,

II. THE right of the people to chooſe their own rulers.

No man is born a magiſtrate, or with a right to rule over his brethren. If this were the caſe, there muſt be ſome natural mark by which it might be known to whom this right belongs, or it could anſwer no end : But no man was ever known to come into the world with any ſuch mark of ſuperiority and dominion. If a man by the improvement of his reaſon and moral powers becomes more wiſe and virtuous than his brethren, this renders him better

better qualified for authority than others: But ſtill he is no magiſtrate or lawgiver, till he is appointed ſuch by the people.

NOR has one ſtate or kingdom a right to appoint rulers for another. This would infer ſuch a natural inequality in mankind as is inconſiſtent with the equal freedom of all. One ſtate may indeed by virtue of its ſuperior power aſſume this right; and the weaker ſtate may be obliged to ſubmit to it, for want of power to reſiſt. But it is an unjuſt encroachment upon their liberty, which they ought to get rid off as ſoon as they can: It is a mark of tyranny on one ſide, and of inglorious ſlavery on the other.

THE magiſtrate is properly the truſtee of the people: he can have no juſt power but what he receives from them. To them he ought to be accountable for the uſe he makes of this power. But if a man may be inveſted with the power of government, which is the united power of the community, without their conſent, how can they call him to account; what check can they have upon him; or what ſecurity for the enjoyment of any thing which he may ſee fit to deprive them of? They muſt in this caſe be ſlaves: But as every people have a right to be free, they muſt have a right of chooſing their own rulers and appointing ſuch as they think moſt proper; becauſe this right is ſo eſſential to liberty, that the moment a people are deprived of it, they ceaſe to be free. This, as has been already

already obſerved, is a right which the Jews always enjoyed; they elected their kings, generals, judges and other officers; tho' in ſome few inſtances God did expreſsly point out to them the perſon whom they ought to chooſe; which however, he has never done to any other people.

Let us now conſider,

III. The buſineſs of rulers in general.

And this is, to promote and ſecure the happineſs of the whole community. For this end only they are inveſted with power, and only for this end it ought to be employed. The apoſtle tells us, that the magiſtrate is God's miniſter for good to the people. This is the ſole end for which God has ordained, that magiſtrates ſhould be appointed, that they may carry on his benevolent purpoſes, in promoting the good and happineſs of human ſociety; and hence their power is ſaid to be from God; that is, it is ſo, while they employ it according to his will. But when they act againſt the good of ſociety, they cannot be ſaid to act by authority from God, any more, than a ſervant can be ſaid to act by his maſter's authority, while he acts directly contrary to his will. And no people, we may preſume, ever elected a magiſtrate for any other end, than their own good; conſequently when a magiſtrate acts againſt this end, he cannot act by authority from the people; ſo that he acts, in this caſe, without any authority either from God

God or man. He cannot by any lawful authority act againſt, but only for the good of ſociety. This in general is the buſineſs of civil rulers: But there are a variety of ways and means by which they are to carry on this buſineſs and accompliſh the important end of their inſtitution, which it is quite beyond my preſent deſign particularly to point out, tho' there may be occaſion to ſuggeſt ſome of them in the progreſs of my diſcourſe.

Let us now conſider,

IV. THE qualifications pointed out in the text, as neceſſary for rulers.

I. They muſt be *able men*. God has made a great difference in men in reſpect of their natural powers both of body and mind: To ſome he has given more, to others fewer talents. Nor is there perhaps a leſs difference in this reſpect, ariſing from education. And tho' their are none but what may be good members of civil ſociety as well as faithful ſervants of God; yet every one has not abilities ſufficient to make him a good civil ruler. Woe unto thee, O land, when thy king is a child, ſays Solomon; hereby intimating that the happineſs of a people depends greatly upon the character of its rulers, and that if they reſemble children in weakneſs, ignorance, credulity, ficklenеſs, &c. the people will of courſe be very miſerable. By able men may be intended men of good underſtanding

ing and knowledge; men of clear heads, who have improved their minds by exerciſe, acquired an habit of reaſoning, and furniſhed themſelves with a good degree of knowledge: Men who have a juſt conception of the nature and end of government in general, of the natural rights of mankind, of the nature and importance of civil and religious liberty; a knowledge of human nature; of the ſprings of action and the readieſt way to engage and influence the heart; an acquaintance with the people to be governed, their genius, their prejudices, their intereſt with reſpect to other ſtates, what difficulties they are under, what dangers they are liable to, and what they are able to bear and do. Theſe things are ever to be taken into conſideration by legiſlators, when they make laws for the internal police of a people, and in their tranſactions with, or reſpecting other ſtates. It would be going too far to ſay, that an honeſt man cannot be a good ruler, unleſs he be of the firſt character for good ſenſe, learning and knowledge; but it will not be denied, that the more he excels in theſe things, the more likely he will be to rule well: He will be better able to ſee what meaſures are ſuited to the temper and genius of the people, and moſt conducive to the end of his inſtitution; how to raiſe neceſſary ſupplies for the expences of government in ways moſt eaſy and agreeable to the people; how to extricate them out of difficulties in which they may be involved; how to negotiate with foreign powers, how to prevent or mitigate the calamities of war, by compromiſing

promiſing differences or putting the people into a condition to defend themſelves and repel injuries: In a word, how to render them happy and reſpectable in peace, or formidable in war. Theſe things require a very conſiderable degree of penetration and knowledge.

As it is of great importance to the community, that learning and knowledge be diffuſed among the people in general, it is proper that the government ſhould take all proper meaſures for this purpoſe; making proviſion for the eſtabliſhment and ſupport of literary ſchools and colleges: But ignorant and illiterate men will not be likely to be the patrons of learning; unacquainted with its excellency and importance, and ſeeing no comlineſs or beauty in it; they will reject and deſpiſe it, as the Jews did the great teacher of wiſdom who came from God. It would not be ſtrange if ſuch men entruſted with the government of a people ſhould wholly neglect to make any proviſion for the encouragement of literature. It is therefore proper that rulers ſhould be men of underſtanding and learning, in order to their being diſpoſed to give due encouragement and ſupport to the teachers and profeſſors of the liberal arts and ſciences.

It may be further obſerved, that weak and illiterate men at the head of a government, will be likely to place, in inferior and ſubordinate offices, men of their own character, merely becauſe they know no better. But

BUT by *able men*, may be intended men of courage, of firmneſs and reſolution of mind: Men that will not ſink into deſpondency at the ſight of difficulties, or deſert their duty at the approach of danger; men that will hazard their lives in defence of the public, either againſt internal ſedition or external enemies, that will not fear the reſentment of turbulent, factious men; that will be a terror to evil doers, however powerful, and a protection to the innocent, however weak:—Men that will decide ſeaſonably upon matters of importance and firmly abide by their deciſion, not wavering with every wind that blows. There are ſome men that will halt between two opinions and heſitate ſo long, when any queſtion of conſequence is before them, and are ſo eaſily ſhaken from their purpoſe, when they have formed one, that they are on this account very unfit to be intruſted with public authority. Such double-minded men will be unſtable in all their ways; their indeciſion in council will produce none but feeble and ineffectual exertions. And this doubting and wavering in the ſupreme authority muſt be prejudicial to the ſtate, and, at ſome critical times, may be attended with fatal conſequences. Wiſe men will not indeed determine raſhly, but when the caſe requires it, they will reſolve ſpeedily, and act with vigor and ſteadineſs.

BY *able men* may be further intended men capable of enduring the burden and fatigue of government; men that have not broken or debili-

tated their bodies or minds, by the effeminating pleaſures of luxury, intemperance or diſſipation. The ſupreme government of a people is always a burden of great weight, tho' more difficult at ſome times, than others. It cannot be managed well without great diligence and application. Weak and effeminate perſons are therefore by no means fit to manage it. But rulers ſhould not only be able men, but

2. *Such as fear God.* The fear of God, in the language of ſcripture, does not intend a ſlaviſh, ſuperſtitious dread, as of an almighty, arbitrary and cruel Being; but that juſt reverence and awe of him, which naturally ariſes from a belief and habitual conſideration of his glorious perfections and providence; of his being the moral governor of the world, a lover of holineſs and a hater of vice, who ſees every thought and deſign, as well as every action of all his creatures, and will puniſh the impenitently vicious and reward the virtuous: It is therefore a fear of offending him productive of obedience to his laws, and ever accompanied with hope in his mercy and that filial love which is due to ſo amiable a character.

It is of great importance that civil rulers be poſſeſſed of this principle. It muſt be obvious to all, that a practical regard to the rules of ſocial virtue is neceſſary to the character of a good magiſtrate. Without this, a man is unworthy of any truſt or confidence. But no principle

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ſo effectually promotes and eſtabliſhes this regard to virtue, as the fear of God. A man may indeed from a regard to the intrinſic amiableneſs and excellency of virtue, from a mere ſenſe of honor, from a love of fame, from a natural benevolence of temper, or from a prudent regard to his own temporal happineſs, follow virtue, when he is under no ſtrong temptation to the contrary. But ſuppoſe him in a ſituation, where he apprehends that temporal infamy and miſery will be the certain conſequence of his practiſing virtue, and temporal honor and happineſs the conſequence of his forſaking it, without any regard to God, as his ruler and judge, and can we expect that he will adhere to his duty? Will he ſacrifice every thing dear in this life, in the cauſe of virtue, when he has no expectation of any reward for it, beyond the grave? Will he deny himſelf a preſent gratification, without any proſpect of being repaid either here or hereafter? Will he expoſe himſelf to reproach, poverty and death for the ſake of doing good to mankind, without any regard to God, as the rewarder of virtue or puniſher of vice? This is not to be expected. We all love, and we ought to love ourſelves, and all wiſh to be happy. Why then ſhould a man give up preſent eaſe and happineſs for ſuffering and death, in the cauſe of virtue, if he has no expectation that God will reward virtue? This would be acting againſt the principle of ſelf-love, which is generally too powerful to be counteracted

But ſuppoſe a man to be habitually under the influence of this principle, that is, to believe and duly conſider God, as his ruler and judge, who will hereafter reward virtue and puniſh vice with happineſs and miſery reſpectively, unſpeakably greater than any to be enjoyed or ſuffered in this world, and he may then upon rational principles and in conſiſtency with his ſelf-love, forego the greateſt temporal good, and expoſe himſelf to the greateſt temporal evil, in the cauſe of virtue; and we may reaſonably expect that he will. Virtue will be his chief good: He will be attached to it, as to his very being, with all the ſtrength and ardor of his love and deſire of happineſs. The fear of God therefore is the moſt effectual, and the only ſure ſupport of virtue in the world.

Men inveſted with civil power are not to be ſure leſs, but generally much more expoſed to temptations to violate their duty than other men: They have more frequent opportunities of committing injuries; and may do it with leſs fear of preſent puniſhment; and therefore ſtand in need of every poſſible reſtraint to keep them from abuſing their power, by deviating into the paths of vice.

It is further to be conſidered, that the practice of piety, which is compriſed in the fear of God, has a powerful tendency to enoble and dignify the mind and beget in it an abhorrence of every thing mean and baſe; to inſpire a magnanimity

nanimity and fortitude of ſpirit that will ſupport and carry it thro' the greateſt dangers and difficulties; to refine and purify the heart, to diſengage it from the vanities of the world, and beget that good will and benevolence which are the brighteſt part of a virtuous character. Contemplating daily the perfections of the Deity, as diſplayed in the creation, government and redemption of the world, muſt naturally tend to exalt the affections and fix them upon divine things, to make us love and deſire to imitate the moral character of God; and conſequently to weaken the force of thoſe luſts which are ſo apt to draw men aſide and entice them into ſin;— to enliven every principle of virtue, and make us perfect, even as our father in heaven is perfect.

It is alſo to be obſerved, that the human mind is liable to miſtake and err, that circumſtances often occur, eſpecially to thoſe who are concerned in government, in which more wiſdom is neceſſary than they are poſſeſſed of, even though they may be able men. In ſuch caſes we are directed to look up to God, the original and inexhauſtible ſource of wiſdom. Nor have we any reaſon to ſuſpect that ſuch applications will be in vain. God perfectly knows the human mind, and all the ways in which its views and determinations can be influenced: And he may without infringing upon its moral liberty, by a powerful, though imperceptible operation, put it into ſuch a train of thinking, as may give

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it a juſter view, and lead it to a wiſer determination, than it would otherwiſe have formed. There is, I apprehend, nothing in this ſuppoſition, inconſiſtent with the principles of rational theology and natural religion. Nor without ſuppoſing that God does thus interpoſe, is it eaſy to conceive how that part of the divine government which is in the hands of civil rulers, ſhould in all caſes be adapted to the various circumſtances of particular perſons. But there is little reaſon to think that this light and direction will be granted to men who have no fear of God before their eyes; becauſe though they lack wiſdom, they will not aſk it of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not. And rulers being without this divine counſel, it will not be ſtrange, if, merely for this reaſon, their conduct is wrong and ill-judged, calculated in many inſtances, not for the good, but the hurt of the people; and it may be, at a critical time, for their utter deſtruction.

THERE can be no doubt, but God often brings diſtreſs and ruin upon a ſinful people, through the ill-management of their rulers, given up to error and blindneſs. In the 19th chapter of Iſaiah we have a propheſy of the overthrow of the kingdom of Egypt. And the infatuation of their rulers is mentioned as one of the immediate cauſes of this calamity. "The ſpirit of Egypt," ſays God, "ſhall fail; and I will deſtroy the counſel thereof." It is afterwards added, "Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the

the counſel of the wiſe counſellors of Pharoah is become brutiſh." And in the 29th chapter of the ſame book, God threatens his own people, that for their hypocriſy and other wickedneſs, "the wiſdom of their wiſe men ſhall periſh, and the underſtanding of their prudent men ſhall be hid." In the ſame way, is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, God often brings his judgments upon other nations. And therefore if a people deſire to have rulers of wiſe and underſtanding hearts, counſelled and directed by heaven, they ſhould take care, that they be men who fear God.

LET me obſerve once more, that it is of great importance to their happineſs, that religion and virtue generally prevail among a people; and in order to this, government ſhould uſe its influence to promote them. Rulers ſhould encourage them not only by their example, but by their authority; and the people ſhould inveſt them with power to do this, ſo far as is conſiſtent with the ſacred and unalienable rights of conſcience; which no man is ſuppoſed to give up, or may lawfully give up, when he enters into ſociety. But reſerving theſe, the people may, and ought to give up every right and power, which will enable him more effectually to promote the common good, without putting it in his power eſſentially to injure it. He ought therefore to have power to puniſh all open acts of profaneſs and impiety, as tending by way of example to deſtroy that reverence of God which

which is the only effectual ſupport of moral virtue; and all open acts of vice, as prejudicial to ſociety: He ſhould have power to provide for the inſtitution and ſupport of the public worſhip of God, and public teachers of religion and virtue, in order to maintain in the minds of the people that reverence of God, and that ſenſe of moral obligation, without which there can be no confidence, no peace or happineſs in ſociety.

WITHOUT ſuch care in government, there is danger that the people will forget the God that is above, and abandon themſelves to vice; or, to ſay the leaſt, impiety and vice are much leſs likely to become general, where ſuch care is taken, than where it is not. And God having in the conſtitution of nature made religion and virtue conducive, and even neceſſary to the happineſs of human ſociety, he has thereby plainly taught us, that it is the duty and buſineſs of ſociety as ſuch, or of the civil magiſtrate to do every thing to promote them, that may be done without injuring the rights of conſcience. And no man who has full liberty of inquiring and examining for himſelf, of openly publiſhing and profeſſing his religious ſentiments, and of worſhipping God in the time and manner which he chooſes, without being obliged to make any religious profeſſions, or attend any religious worſhip contrary to his ſentiments, can juſtly complain that his rights of conſcience are infringed. And ſuch liberty and freedom every man may enjoy, tho' the government ſhould require him

to pay his proportion towards ſupporting public teachers of religion and morality.

TAKING this care of religion appears to be ſo plain and important a duty, that the government which ſhould wholly neglect it, would not only act a very unwiſe and imprudent part with reſpect to themſelves; but be guilty of baſe ingratitude and a daring affront to heaven. By ſuch conduct they would, as a community, in effect adopt the language of the profane fataliſts mentioned by Job, who "ſay unto God, depart from us; for we deſire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we ſhould ſerve him? And what profit ſhall we have if we pray unto him?" Now altho' it is poſſible, that rulers who have no religion themſelves, may enact proper laws to ſupport it among the people, yet it is to be remembered, that their example will have great influence, and, if that be irreligious and vicious, will, in ſome meaſure, defeat the good effects of their authority, and do more to ſpread corruption, than that will to prevent it. It is therefore highly proper in order to promote piety and good morals among the people, that rulers be men who fear God; who have a juſt ſenſe of religion on their own minds, and conform to it in their lives.

IT may be proper to add, that though the fear of God may exiſt, where there is no knowledge or belief of chriſtianity; yet that the ſcheme of doctrines contained in the goſpel, is much

better calculated than any other known to the world, to produce and ſtrengthen that divine principle. The plan of redemption which it unfolds for the fallen race of men, exhibits the Deity in the moſt amiable light, as the perfection of love and benevolence: "The ſolemn ſcenes which it opens beyond the grave; the reſurrection of the dead; the general judgment; the equal diſtribution of rewards and puniſhments to the good and bad; and the full completion of divine wiſdom and goodneſs, in the final eſtabliſhment of order, perfection and happineſs," afford ſuch motives to the love and reverence of God, and to the practice of all holineſs and virtue, as can be drawn from no other ſcheme of religion: And therefore a belief of the goſpel of Chriſt may juſtly be conſidered, as an important qualification for a civil ruler.

I might obſerve further under this particular, that impious, immoral men at the head of government, and having authority to appoint ſubordinate officers, will probably make choice of men of their own character, and in this way be a means of ſpreading corruption, and of much injury to ſociety: But I muſt paſs on to conſider another qualification of rulers. For

III. They muſt be *men of truth.*

THIS means men free from deceit and hypocriſy, guile and falſehood: Men who will not by flattery and cajoling, by falſehood, and ſlandering

dering a competitor endeavor to get into authority: And who when they are in, will conſciencioufly ſpeak the truth in all their declarations and promiſes, and punctually fulfil all their engagements.

In treating with other ſtates, they will act with the ſame integrity which honeſt men do in their private affairs, and promiſe nothing but what they intend, and think they ſhall be able to perform. Engagements already made to other powers, they will honeſtly endeavor to fulfil, ſo far as it belongs to their department, without ſeeking or pretending a cauſe for failure, when no ſuch cauſe exiſts.

They will ſhew the ſame integrity and fidelity in their conduct towards individuals. They will not promiſe to any one, what they have reaſon to think they cannot, or do not intend to perform. Promiſes of government already made, the execution of which belongs to them, they will look upon themſelves bound to fulfil, if poſſible, that no man may be a ſufferer by confiding in the public faith.

Civil rulers generally bind themſelves expreſsly, and always implicitly by accepting their office, faithfully to diſcharge the duties of it. And a man of truth will pay a ſacred regard to this engagement. He will not content himſelf with receiving the honors and emoluments of his office, while he neglects the duties of it: Conſidering

ſidering, that he has ſolemnly bound himſelf to do this buſineſs, he will give the ſame care and attention to it, that a prudent man in a private ſtation does to his own particular concerns. A man of truth will not undertake an office, for which he thinks himſelf incapable; becauſe this would be promiſing to do, what he is conſcious, he is incapable of doing; nor will he be inſtrumental of appointing others to offices, for which he thinks them unqualified; this would be acting falſely; becauſe by the appointment he declares, that he thinks them qualified. Having ſolemnly engaged to uſe his power for the public good, he will never employ it in encouraging and ſupporting the enemies of his country, or to carry on, under the maſk of patriotiſm, meaſures to promote his own ſelfiſh and private views, or to ſcreen and protect from public juſtice, offenders againſt ſociety. He will not employ his abilities to impoſe upon the underſtandings of others, and make the worſe appear the better reaſon, in order to diſguiſe truth, and pervert juſtice. He will not ſuffer one man, or one part of the community to be injured and robbed by another, when his office enables him to prevent it; becauſe this would be violating his promiſe. In a word, he will to his utmoſt endeavor to anſwer the end of his inſtitution by performing the duties of his ſtation, and manifeſt by all his conduct that he is an honeſt, upright man. He will make no falſe pretences, he will put on no falſe appearances, but ever act with chriſtian ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity.

Such will be the conduct of men of truth: And ſuch men only are proper to be intruſted with authority over a free people. Rulers of this character will be honored, beloved and confided in by their countrymen, and reſpected by other nations; their ſubjects will be eaſy and happy, united together in the bonds of truth and love, and by their union able to defend themſelves againſt invaders; their government reſting on the baſis of truth and juſtice, will be firm and ſtable, revered and honoured both at home and abroad. Whereas that deceit and hypocriſy, that falſehood and inſincerity, that diſſimulation and craftineſs, which have ſo often dictated the meaſures of government in moſt of the nations of the earth, and which are expreſly recommended to rulers by Machiavel, and inculcated among other immoralities, as neceſſary parts of a good education, in the celebrated and much admired letters of a late britiſh nobleman to his ſon, * however they may ſometimes ſucceed and procure ſome temporary advantages, will almoſt always weaken and diſgrace the government which practices them, † by ſapping the foundation of public credit, producing uneaſy jealouſies, diſaffection, diviſions and contempt of authority among the people, and leading them by example to the practice of the ſame inſincerity

* Lord *Cheſterfield*.

† There is no ſafety where there is no ſtrength, no ſtrength without union, no union without juſtice, no juſtice where faith and truth in accompliſhing public and private engagements is wanting.

Sidney's diſcourſes concerning government.

inſincerity, falſehood and diſhoneſty towards one another, which they ſee in their rulers; and by rendering them infamous in the eyes of other nations, and perhaps raiſing up enemies to puniſh their perfidy.

And it may without doubt be aſſerted with truth, upon the principles both of natural religion and revelation, that that government, which is directed by truth and integrity, will bid the faireſt to ſecure and promote the happineſs of the community, however contrary this aſſertion may be to the principles and practices of modern courtiers and politicians. But I muſt proceed to the other qualification of a good ruler, mentioned in the text which is

4. *Hating coveteouſneſs.* Coveteouſneſs, you all know, is an inordinate deſire of riches; ſuch a deſire as will make a man purſue them by unlawful means, and prevent his uſing them in a right manner. Hating coveteouſneſs is a ſtrong expreſſion to denote a freedom from this vicious temper, and a ſenſe of its unreaſonableneſs and turpitude.

That it is of great importance that civil rulers have this qualification will be evident upon a little reflection.

Coveteousness is a fruitful ſource of corruption. A man governed by this appetite will be guilty of any enormity for the ſake of gratifying

tifying it. "They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts which drown men in deſtruction and perdition : For the love of money is the root of all evil." Almoſt all the oppreſſion, fraud and violence that has been done under the ſun, has owed its riſe and progreſs to coveteouſneſs. The indulgence of this vice debaſes the mind, and renders it incapable of any thing generous and noble, contracts its views, deſtroys the principles of benevolence, friendſhip and patriotiſm, and gives a tincture of ſelfiſhneſs to all its ſentiments : It hardens the heart and makes it deaf to the cries of diſtreſs and the dictates of charity ; it blinds and perverts the judgment and diſpoſes it to confound truth and falſehood, right and wrong.

A CIVIL ruler under the direction of this principle will oppreſs and defraud his ſubjects, whenever he has it in his power ; he will neglect the duties of his office, whenever he can promote his private intereſt by the neglect ; he will enact laws to ſerve himſelf, not the community, and he will enact none that he thinks would be prejudicial to his private intereſt, however beneficial they might be to the public, however neceſſary for the ſupport of juſtice and equity between man and man ; he will pervert juſtice and rob the innocent for bribes ; he will diſcourage every meaſure that would occaſion expence to himſelf, however ſalutary to his country ; rather than part with his money, he will

will ſee the arts and ſciences, which are ſo ornamental and friendly to a community, languiſh, erudition ſtarve, and the riſing genius which promiſed glory to his country, nipt in the bud by the cold hand of poverty; yea religion itſelf, the greateſt honor and bleſſing of ſociety, he will ſee languiſh and die, rather than impart any thing to ſupport its cauſe; and having long looked upon riches in the ſame light that good men do upon religion, as his chief good, and feeling the ſame attachment to them which they do to that, he may, if required, by laws already made, to pay any thing for its ſupport, abſurdly plead, that it is againſt his conſcience, ſtrangely miſtaking his love of money for the love of God, and his coveteouſneſs for his conſcience; ſuppoſing, with thoſe corrupters of religion mentioned by the apoſtle, "that gain is Godlineſs." If he has a voice in the appointment of ſubordinate officers, he will ſell his vote to the higheſt bidder, and appoint ſuch as will be moſt ſubſervient to his private intereſt, however unqualified for the office: In a word, all his conduct, all his reaſoning and votes will be tinctured by his ſelfiſh ſpirit; and in a critical time when great expence is neceſſary for the public ſafety, he may by his parſimony be a means of the ruin of his country.

BUT a ruler who hates coveteouſneſs will conduct in a very different manner.—He will never oppreſs or wrong the community; the public intereſt will be always ſafe in his hands; he

he will freely expend his time and his eſtate, in diſcharging the duties of his office for the good of his country; he will be ever ready to promote good laws, tho' they deprive him of opportunities of making gain, and involve him in expence; he will deviſe liberal things, and chearfully bear his part in the expence neceſſary to carry on every meaſure, that promiſes advantage to his country; he will do all in his power to promote the liberal arts and ſciences, manufactures and all uſeful inventions, to encourage men of learning and genius, and to aid the cauſe of religion and virtue: In promoting men to places of truſt, he will be influenced by no ſelfiſh, private views, but by a regard to the public good; no bribe will purchaſe his vote for an unfit man, and hating coveteouſneſs himſelf, no conſideration will induce him to give it for a ſordid, avaritious wretch; he will neglect no meaſures neceſſary for the public ſafety and happineſs, for fear of parting with his money. In fine, all his conduct will bear the marks of his nobleneſs and liberality of ſentiment, of his diſintereſtedneſs and public ſpirit.

I HAVE now conſidered the ſeveral qualifications of a good ruler mentioned in the text: And they all appear neceſſary to form that character, whether in the legiſlative, executive or judicial department: Nor is it eaſy to ſay in which, they are moſt neceſſary; tho' it is not difficult to ſee, that the want of any one of them in either, muſt be prejudicial and dangerous to the community. But

I muſt now make ſome reflections upon the ſubject, and apply it to the preſent occaſion. And

1. WHAT has been ſaid of the neceſſity of government for the peace and happineſs of mankind, may lead us to reflect with ſhame upon the ſelfiſhneſs and corruption of our ſpecies, who, with all their rational and moral powers, can no otherwiſe be kept from injuring and deſtroying one another, than by ſuperior force, or the fear of temporal ſufferings and puniſhment; and with whom you are no longer ſafe, than it is unſafe for them to hurt you. This is a very humiliating conſideration: And, ſo far as we know, there is no other order of creatures thro' out the boundleſs univerſe, who, if left to their natural liberty, would be ſo miſchievous to one another as men.

2. This may alſo lead us to reflect with pleaſure and gratitude to God, upon the ſteps which have been taken by this people to frame a new conſtitution of government; and that a plan has been formed which appears in general ſo well calculated to guard the rights and liberties, and promote the happineſs of ſociety; and which it is to be hoped will ſoon be the foundation of our government, inſtead of that antiquated inſecure baſis upon which it now reſts.

3. WE may likewiſe ſee from what has been ſaid, how much it is the duty and intereſt of a people to pay due ſubmiſſion to the orders of government,

government, and to endeavour unitedly to ſupport its authority. Both rulers and ſubjects are perhaps too apt to conſider their reſpective intereſts as diſtinct and ſeparate: Whereas they are in truth one and the ſame,—the proſperity and happineſs of the whole community. Every thing done by ſubjects in obedience to, and ſupport of, the juſt authority of government is conducive to their own happineſs; and every thing done by governors, that is beneficial to the governed, is likewiſe ſo to themſelves: And it is from the mutual endeavors of both to ſerve each other, that the proſperity of ſociety muſt reſult. If rulers abuſe their power, they may deſtroy the happineſs of the community; but this may be done as effectually by the ſubjects refuſing to obey and ſupport the authority of government. Nor may any people expect to enjoy all the bleſſings of ſociety, unleſs their government is preſerved in due force and vigor.

4. We are reminded of the gratitude which we owe to God, that he has not permitted the natural and important right which every ſociety has of electing its own rulers to be wreſted out of our hands, as is the caſe in ſome other countries. Had Great-Britain carryed on, without oppoſition, the meaſures ſhe was purſuing with us, we ſhould probably in a little time have been wholly deprived of this privilege. She had already aſſumed an abſolute right of appointing two branches of the legiſlature. Theſe would have had the appointment of all judicial and military officers:

And

And upon the ſame ground that ſhe robbed us of the election of a Governor formerly, and of Counſellors lately, ſhe might have annihilated the Houſe of Repreſentatives; or if ſhe had not done this in form, ſhe might by bribery and corruption, have rendered that houſe a meer tool to the ſervants of the crown, as is the caſe in that country. It is therefore owing to the oppoſition whichhis people made to the meaſures of the Britiſh court, and to the bleſſing of God upon that oppoſition, that they have now a voice in appointing their own rulers; otherwiſe our government might now have been in the hands of the weakeſt and moſt profligate favourites of that corrupt and infatuated court.

5. We are reminded how much it is the duty and intereſt of a people, who are in the injoyment of this right, to exerciſe it with prudence and integrity. The people's appointing their own rulers will be no ſecurity for their good government and happineſs, if they pay no regard to the character of the men they appoint. A dunce or a knave, a profligate or an avaricious worldling will not make a good magiſtrate, becauſe he is elected by the people. To make this right of advantage to the community, due attention muſt be paid to the abilities and moral character of the candidate. This is a conſideration that concerns this people at large, as all have a voice in the election of our rulers, either perſonally, or by their repreſentatives. But upon this occaſion it is proper to obſerve, that it

eſpecially concerns the members of the honorable Council and houſe of Repreſentatives here preſent, by whom the counſellors for the enſuing year are this day to be elected. And I ſhall not, I hope, be tho't to go beyond my line of duty, if I ſay; that the electors ought not to give their votes at random, or from perſonal or private views. They act in this buſineſs in a public character, by virtue of power delegated to them by the people, to whom, as well as to God, the origin of all power, they are accountable for the uſe they make of it. Nor can they anſwer it to either, or even to their own conſciences, if thro' intereſted or party views, they advance to the Council Board, men unqualified for the important duties of that ſtation. At ſuch a critical time as the preſent, the want of wiſdom or integrity in that houſe may be attended with the moſt fatal conſequences. The advice of Jethro in the text, demands the conſideration of all thoſe who are to bear a part in the elections of this day. "Provide out of all the people, able men, ſuch as fear God, men of truth, hating coveteouſneſs." There never was a time when ſuch men were more neceſſary at that board than the preſent. Nor would I entertain an opinion ſo diſhonorable to my country, as to ſuppoſe there are not ſuch men in it; tho' I cannot at the ſame time entertain an idea ſo flattering, as to ſuppoſe there are not many among us who fall far ſhort of this character. It belongs to the preſent electors to diſtinguiſh, ſo far as they can, theſe characters,

one

one from the other, and to give their votes only for the former. Whoever conſiders the part which this Board has in legiſlation, their authority in directing the military and naval force of the ſtate, their being inveſted with the ſupreme executive power, and in ſome important caſes with a ſupreme judicial power will be ſenſible, that great wiſdom, integrity and fortitude are neceſſary for the right management of theſe powers. Should they be committed to men of ſmall abilities and little knowledge; men unacquainted with the nature of government, and with the circumſtances of this ſtate; men void of integrity, of narrow, contracted views, governed by ambition, avarice or ſome other ſelfiſh paſſion; men of no fortitude and reſolution, of daſtardly effeminate ſpirits; ſhould ſuch men, I ſay, be intruſted with the great and important powers veſted in the Council, what could be expected, but that their public conduct would bear the marks of their ignorance, weakneſs, effeminacy and ſelfiſhneſs, to the great injury and diſhonor, if not to the ruin of the common wealth. And tho' ſuch men may be as fond of this ſtation, as thoſe who are beſt qualified for it, and perhaps much fonder, yet it would be ſo far from rendering them truly *honourable*, that it would only render them the more infamous, by bringing into public view their vices and defects; while the electors of ſuch men, would fix an indelible ſtain upon their own characters, and inherit the curſes of the preſent and future generations.

But men who have themſelves been honored by the unbiaſed ſuffrages of their country, muſt ſurely be too wiſe and virtuous, thus to proſtitute their votes ; and it may, I hope, be taken for granted, that knowledge and integrity, the fear of God, and a public ſpirit, will govern in the enſuing election, and ſuch men be raiſed to the Council Board as will do honor to that reſpectable ſtation, to their electors and themſelves.

I now beg leave, with all due defference and ſubmiſſion, to ſuggeſt a few things that may reaſonably be expected of a General Court, compoſed of ſuch men as the text deſcribes, by the people who have inveſted them with this power and authority, And,

It may be expected, that they will give due attention to the public affairs committed to their care. By accepting a ſeat in either houſe, a man does, implicitly at leaſt, ſolemnly engage to attend to the buſineſs, which is there to be tranſacted. Nor, do I ſee how he can with any propriety be called a man of truth, who after ſuch engagement, neglects that buſineſs, for the ſake of going to his farm, his merchandiſe or his pleaſure. It appears to me, that ſuch neglect argues great unfaithfulneſs in the delinquents, and it may be attended with very pernicious conſequences. Individuals may and often do plead in excuſe for this, that the buſineſs may be done without them : But they ought

ought to remember, that every one has an equal right to excuſe himſelf by this plea, and if all ſhould do ſo, the concerns of the public muſt be wholly neglected. But,

IT may be juſtly expected that our civil rulers will take due care to provide for the public defence. Notwithſtanding the great exertions we have already made, and the great things which God has done for us, we muſt ſtill contend with the enemies of our rights and liberties, or become their abject ſlaves. And it depends, in a great meaſure, upon our public rulers under God, whether we ſhall contend with ſucceſs, or not. It is by their ſeaſonable and prudent meaſures that an army is to be provided and furniſhed with neceſſaries, to oppoſe the enemy. And it muſt be the wiſh of every true American, that nothing may be omitted which can be done to ſupport and render ſucceſsful ſo important a cauſe: a cauſe ſo juſt in the ſight of God and man, which Heaven has ſo remarkably owned, and all wiſe and good men approved; a cauſe which not only directly involves in it the rights and liberties of America; but in which the happineſs of mankind is ſo nearly concerned: For in this extenſive light I have always conſidered the cauſe in which we are contending. Should our enemies finally prevail, and eſtabliſh that abſolute dominion over us, at which they aim, they would not only render us the moſt miſerable of all nations, but probably be able by the riches and forces of America to triumph over the arms of

France

France and Spain, and carry their conqueſts to every corner of the globe; nor can we doubt, but that they would carry them, wherever there was wealth to tempt the enterprize: The noble ſpirit of liberty which has ariſen in Ireland would be inſtantly cruſhed, and the brave men, who have appeared foremoſt in its ſupport, be rewarded with an ax or a halter: The few advocates for this ſuffering cauſe in Britain would be hunted and perſecuted as enemies to government, and be obliged in deſpair to abandon her intereſt: And in every country where this event ſhould be known, the friends of liberty would be diſheartened, and ſeeing her in the power of her enemies, forſake her, as the diſciples of Chriſt did their maſter. So that our being ſubdued to the will of our enemies, might in its conſequences be the baniſhment of liberty from among mankind. The heaven-born virgin ſeeing her votaries ſlain, her altars o'er-thrown, and her temples demoliſhed, and finding no ſafe habitation on earth, would be obliged like the great patron of liberty, the firſt-born of God, to aſcend to her God and our God, her Father and our Father, from whom ſhe was ſent to bleſs mankind, leaving an ungrateful world, after ſhe had like him, been "rejected and deſpiſed of men," in ſlavery and miſery, till with him ſhe ſhall again deſcend to reign and triumph on earth. Such might be the conſequence, ſhould the arms of Britain triumph over us. Whereas, if America preſerves her freedom, ſhe will be an aſylum for the oppreſſed and perſecuted of

every country; her example and ſucceſs will encourage the friends, and rouſe a ſpirit of liberty thro' other nations; and will probably be the means of freedom and happineſs to Ireland, and perhaps in time to Great-Britain and many other countries. So that our conteſt is not meerly for our own families, friends, and poſterity; but for the rights of humanity, for the civil and religious privileges of mankind. We have ſurely then a right to expect, that the government of this ſtate will neglect no meaſure that is neceſſary on their part, to aid ſo intereſting a cauſe, whatever difficulties or expence may attend it. And, I hope, it may with equal confidence be expected, that the people will chearfully lend their arms, and bear the expence that may be required for ſo glorious a purpoſe. Great expence muſt without doubt be neceſſary to carry on our defence: But whoever is diſpoſed on this account, to give up the diſpute, proves himſelf totally unworthy of the liberty for which we are contending.

As the ſupport, or rather the recovery of the public credit, is abſolutely neceſſary to our having a reſpectable army in the field, as well as to our internal peace and proſperity; it may be expected that this government will not be wanting in any meaſure for this purpoſe, which wiſdom and ſound policy can ſuggeſt.

If by means of the depreciation of our paper currency, and any law of this ſtate, many perſons

ſons have ſuffered, and are ſtill liable to ſuffer great injury; if this injuſtice falls principally upon widows and fatherleſs children, and ſuch others as are leaſt able to ſupport themſelves under the loſs. this ſurely is an evil that ought ſpeedily to be redreſſed; and, if it be poſſible, compenſation ſhould be made to the ſufferers, by thoſe who have grown rich by this iniquity. And as the General Court of the laſt year, did with great juſtice make an allowance, for the depreciation of the currency, in fixing their own wages, and in ſome other inſtances, it may juſtly be expected that the honourable Court of this year, will go on to extend this juſtice to every part of the community, and order the ſame allowance to be made in diſcharging all debts and contracts, however their private intereſt may be thereby affected.

THE large taxes now levying and to be levied, make it peculiarly proper that great care ſhould be taken in fixing the proportion which the different parts of the community are reſpectively to pay; and we have a right to expect, that our honoured fathers who are to guard the rights of the whole, will not require any particular part to bear a greater proportion of this burden than is juſt, conſidering its ability and circumſtances.

LIBERTY and learning are ſo friendly to each other, and ſo naturally thrive and flouriſh together, that we may juſtly expect, that the guardians of the former will not neglect the latter.

The

The good education of children is a matter of great importance to the common-wealth. Youth is the time to plant the mind with the principles of virtue, truth and honor, the love of liberty and of their country; and to furniſh it with all uſeful knowledge. And tho' in this buſineſs much depends upon parents, guardians and maſters, yet it is incumbent upon the government to make proviſion for ſchools, and all ſuitable means of inſtruction. Our College juſtly claims the patronage and aſſiſtance of the ſtate, in return for the able men with which ſhe has furniſhed the public; not to obſerve, that her preſent ſuffering and low ſtate renders her an object of pity: By the well known depreciation, ſhe, as well as many of her ſons in the miniſtry, have loſt a great part of their income; ſhe and they having in this reſpect, had the ſame hard lot with widows and orphans. Nor will I ſuppoſe that we ſhall ever have a General Court, of ſo little love to their country, or ſo little ſenſible of the importance of literature to its virtue, liberty and happineſs, ſo barbarous and ſavage, as to ſuffer her, or any of her family to languiſh in poverty, or to want what is neceſſary to their making a decent and honorable appearance.

If any thing can be done by government to diſcourage prodigality and extravagance, vain and expenſive amuſements, and fantaſtic foppery, and to encourage the oppoſite virtues, we may reaſonably hope it will not be neglected. The fondneſs of our countrymen, or, ſhall I ſay, country

country-women, for ſhowey and uſeleſs ornaments and other articles of luxury, has been remarked by a gentleman in Europe, of great eminence for political wiſdom, as very unbecoming our preſent circumſtances. This is a folly that bodes ill to the public; and it muſt be the wiſh of every wiſe and good man, that it were laid aſide. Men in authority, if they can do no more, may, at leaſt diſcountenance it by their example; and this will not be without its good effect.

FINALLY, our political fathers will not fail, to do all they can, to promote religion and virtue through the community, as the ſureſt means of rendering their government eaſy and happy to themſelves and the people. For this purpoſe they will watch over their morals, with the ſame affectionate and tender care, that a pious and prudent parent watches over his children, and by all the methods which love to God and man can inſpire, and wiſdom point out, endeavor to check and ſuppreſs all impiety and vice, and lead the people to the practice of that righteouſneſs which exalteth a nation. If any new laws are wanting, or more care in the execution of laws already made, for diſcouraging profaneſs, intemperance, lewdneſs, extravagant gaming, extortion, fraud, oppreſſion or any other vice, they will take ſpeedy care to ſupply this defect, and render themſelves a terror to evil doers, as well as an encouragement to ſuch as do well. They will promote to places of truſt, men of piety,

truth

truth and benevolence. Nor will they fail to exhibit in their own lives, a fair example of that piety and virtue, which they wiſh to ſee practiſed by the people: They will ſhew that they are not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt, by paying a due regard to his ſacred inſtitutions, and to all the laws of his kingdom. Magiſtrates may probably do more in this way, than in any other, and perhaps more than any other order of men, to preſerve or recover the morals of a people. The manners of a court are peculiarly catching, and, like the blood in the heart, quickly flow to the moſt diſtant members of the body. If therefore rulers deſires to ſee religion and virtue flouriſh in the community over which they preſide, they muſt countenance and encourage them by their own example. And to excite them to this,

I MUST not omit to obſerve, that tho' the fear of God, a regard to truth and a hatred of coveteouſneſs, are neceſſary to form the character of a good ruler, they are, if poſſible, ſtill more neceſſary to form the character of a good man, and ſecure the approbation of God, the Judge of all. For to him magiſtrates in common with other men are accountable. Nor does he regard the perſons of princes any more than of their ſubjects. If they are impious and vicious, if they abuſe their power, they may bring great miſery upon other men, but they will ſurely bring much greater upon themſelves. The eye of heaven ſurveys all their counſels, deſigns and actions; and the day is coming, when theſe

ſhall

ſhall all be made manifeſt, and every one receive according to his works. Happy they, who in that day ſhall be found faithful, for they ſhall lift up their heads with confidence, and amidſt applauding angels enter into the joy of their Lord: While thoſe who have oppreſſed and injured the people by their power, and corrupted them by their example, ſhall be covered with ſhame and confuſion, and ſentenced to that place of blackneſs and darkneſs, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth!

LET me now conclude, by reminding this aſſembly in general, that it concerns us all to fear God, and to be men of truth hating coveteouſneſs. The low and declining ſtate of religion and virtue among us, is too obvious not to be ſeen, and of too threatening an aſpect not to be lamented by all the lovers of God and their country. Tho' our happineſs as a community, depends much upon the conduct of our rulers; yet it is not in the power of the beſt government to make an impious, profligate people happy. How well-ſoever our public affairs may be managed, we may undo ourſelves by our vices. And it is from hence, I apprehend, that our greateſt danger ariſes. That ſpirit of infidelity, ſelfiſhneſs, luxury and diſſipation, which ſo deeply marks our preſent manners, is more formidable than all the arms of our enemies. Would we but reform our evil ways, humble ourſelves under the corrections, and be thankful for the mercies of heaven; revive that piety and public

ſpirit

ſpirit, that temperance and frugality, which have entailed immortal honor on the memory of our renowned anceſtors ; we might then, putting our truſt in God, humbly hope that our public calamities would be ſoon at an end, our independence eſtabliſhed, our rights and liberties ſecured, and glory, peace and happineſs dwell in our land. Such happy effects to the public, might we expect from a general reformation.

BUT let every one remember, that whatever others may do, and however it may fare with our country, it ſhall ſurely be well with the righteous ; and when all the mighty ſtates and empires of this world ſhall be diſſolved and paſs away " like the baſeleſs fabrick of a viſion", they ſhall enter into the kingdom of their father which cannot be moved, and in the enjoyment and exerciſe of perfect peace, liberty and love, ſhine forth as the ſun forever and ever.

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CORRECTIONS.

Page	line	from	read
12	7	bottom	in this.
23	7	top	it is
	7	bottom	power to the magiſtrate,
24	5	bottom	profeſſion
25	3 & 4	top	is ſo plain and important
34	4	bottom	inſecure baſis
35	3	bottom	two branches
36	9	top	this people.

☞ *Some ſlips in ſpelling and pointing are omitted.*